

Friday 11 January 2013

2013 CITIZEN and YOUNG CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Australia Day Ceremony, Saturday 26 January, Ryde Civic Hall, 1 Devlin Street, Ryde, from 10.00am

A unique group of local people who have earned the admiration of the community will be honoured on Australia Day when the 2013 City of Ryde Citizen of the Year and Young Citizen of the Year are announced.

The nominees, whose ages range from teens through to seniors, represent the high values and diversity of our community. They include community advocates, students, volunteers, safety experts, medical professionals, performers and educators. While some are quiet achievers, all have left their mark on an appreciative community.

Citizen of the Year Nominees

Jacques Baran
Michael Crane
Asfana Gorginian
Dr Jenó 'Ben' Marosszéký
James Pneumaticas
Maria Venuti AM
Raymond Wilson OAM

Young Citizen of the Year Nominees

Alana Bourke
Hayden Evans
Carla Kassab
Paul Perrett

City of Ryde Mayor, Cllr Ivan Petch, said: "These Awards are our City's way of saying 'thank you' to those individuals who have worked tirelessly to enrich our community through their commitment and service to others.

"The diversity of the nominees, the qualities they show and the broad range of their achievements made this year's selection very difficult. They are all winners in our eyes.

"When reading the stories of these citizens it becomes very clear that they show selfless dedication and exemplify the community spirit that thrives in the City of Ryde."

The Citizen of the Year awards recognise those who have performed outstanding community service and whose dedication to their goals has made a positive and lasting difference to our community.

The special Australia Day event, which is by invitation only, will be held at the Ryde Civic Hall, 1 Devlin Street, Ryde, and includes an address by the City of Ryde's Australia Day Ambassadors – iconic radio duo Jonathan 'Jono' Coleman and Ian 'Dano' Rogerson.

Fifty new Australian citizens, all local residents hailing from countries around the globe, will also be welcomed as part of the Australia Day ceremony.

Celebrations will continue at the annual Australia Day Family Concert and Fireworks Spectacular at North Ryde Common (5.00 – 9.30pm). Lead act for the evening is DIRTY DEEDS – Australia's Number 1 AC/DC Tribute Show. For full details go to www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/australiaday

2013 Citizen of the Year Nominees

Jacques Baran

Born in Syria and educated in Lebanon, Jacques Baran migrated to Australia with his family in 1985. He brought with him a strong work ethic, a desire to assimilate and to celebrate his community and his Armenian heritage. A successful career in top management also led to volunteering in Ryde where Mr Baran's practical help and dedication to the value of the individual has helped the frail, aged and disabled as well as local families and many international students.

Michael Crane

As a keen Easy Care Gardening volunteer for over five years, Michael Crane works in the gardens of frail aged pensioners and people on a disability pension. Having worked in over 300 Ryde gardens as part of a team that weeds, prunes, mulches and maintains, Michael has helped not only gardens to thrive but also many hundreds of Ryde residents to continue living independent lives in their own homes.

Afsana Gorginian

Mrs Gorginian has always put the needs of others first. In 1979 the war in Iran brought personal tragedy, but years of hardship did not deter Afsana from educating her children, caring for her sick husband and also volunteering. After migrating to Australia in 1988 Afsana supported the family and continued to volunteer. She has helped generations of local Armenians to connect with their culture and celebrate the advantages of living in Australia.

Dr Jenó 'Ben' Marosszéký

At 73 years of age, Dr 'Ben' Marosszéký, as he is known to his patients, has dedicated his life to the care and treatment of the sick and infirm. He is widely recognised through the medical fraternity and the community as a skilled, untiring and caring individual. His contribution to medical research and the education of young students has helped many. His humour and vigour both inspires and benefits the community at large.

James Pnematicas

James has dedicated his career to improving the safety of NSW state roads through the provision of Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS). He helped introduce 'stopped vehicle detection systems' that inform operators when objects stop in a dangerous area of a freeway. He also assisted in the installation of Variable Message Signs, Variable Speed Limit Signs, weather station and traffic control systems. James is an active member of the local community through charitable works.

Maria Venuti AM

Maria Venuti AM has been an icon of show business, television, stage and movies for over 50 years. She has helped raise millions of dollars for charity, including Australian Variety for Children.

She is President of Australian Ladies Variety Association which raises money to assist older and retired performers and to provide them with accommodation. As a talent quest judge, Maria has also encouraged countless young performers to further their careers, and has entertained Australian service men and women on many occasions.

Ray Wilson OAM

Ray is described as a 'man of Gladesville' and the man who makes things happen. Ray has lived and worked in the area his entire life. As the local butcher, he thinks he has cooked more sausages than anyone through his work for Rotary Sausage Sizzle. As President of the Gladesville Chamber of Commerce as Patron of Gladesville Public School and has worked tirelessly for the community towards the revitalisation of the Gladesville town centre.

Young Citizen of the Year Nominees

Alana Bourke

A member of the Ryde Youth Theatre, Alana has been involved in the group's three annual productions, including marketing and performing. In January 2011, she took up the challenge of creating and editing a new magazine for young people by young people. **[type] ryde** is a popular bi-monthly publications with a growing readership and its success is due to Alana's dedication, talent and enthusiasm and her ability to draw in new talent to collaborate and contribute to the success of the publication.

Hayden Evans

As Chairperson of the Ryde Youth Council (RYC) since 2010, Hayden has been integral to the success of the group's many endeavours. He has played a hands-on role in coordinating and managing all RYC events including The Core (Granny Smith Festival), Youth Week's Battle of the Bands and All the Colours of Ryde Festival. Hayden's enthusiasm and encouragement of other members to express their ideas is a sign of his leadership and participation skills.

Carla Kassab

Carla is committed to young people's empowerment and leadership in the local community. Through her involvement with the Ryde Youth Council (RYC), Carla has shown her enthusiasm and skills of leadership, management, consultation and team work in many local events such as the Community Christmas Celebration and Harmony Day. Carla has spoken up and represented the ideas and views of local young people both at RYC meetings and as a member of the NSW Health Youth Team.

Paul Perrett

Paul is a self motivated, passionate individual and an active member of the Ryde Salvation Army. Juggling work, sport and university commitments Paul devotes many hours to volunteering and mentoring kids through sports, crafts and various activities. He has helped disadvantaged children in Cambodia and Ghana and worked with asylum seekers and refugees. He provides a positive male influence for local youths and is able to open up their horizons with his own real life experiences.